THE CURSE OF PELADON

DOCTOR WHO

AN ADVENTURE IN SPACE & TIME

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code: MMM - Brian Hayles

The storm-swept planet of Peladon is a developing world now seeking admittance to the Galactic Federation. A Federation committee is coming to assess the planet and representatives from Mars and Arcturus have already landed. When the delegate from Alpha Centauri arrives and presents its credentials to the young King Peladon, they await only the party from Earth.

The Doctor has finally got the TARDIS working again, and he takes Jo on a 'test flight'. When they accidentally materialise on Peladon they are mistaken for the Earth delegates and presented before the King, where Jo poses as the Earth Princess and the Doctor her advisor! The Doctor gets a bigger surprise when he meets the delegates from Mars - Ice Warriors!

The Time Lord learns of a recent death at the claws of a legendary Peladonian beast - Aggedor. The High Priest, Hepesh, states that the killing is a sign of Aggedor's anger at Peladon wishing to join the Federation, and his words quickly have an effect on Arcturus and Alpha Centauri, who wish to withdraw. Luckily, the Doctor is able to placate them. As they are leaving the throne room a large statue of Aggedor falls from a ledge (pushed by the King's Champion Grun on the orders of Hepesh) and narrowly misses the delegates. Hepesh again states that it is a warning from Aggedor but the Doctor suspects the Ice Warriors due to his previous encounters with their race.

Hearing an alarm signal the Doctor goes to the aid of Arcturus, who he finds in a state of distress. Someone has tampered with the creature's life-support system. Fortunately the Time Lord is able to repair it. Hepesh proclaims this to be the work of Aggedor but the Doctor asserts that someone in the castle is trying to frighten the delegates off. The question is who, and why?

Disobeying the Doctor's instructions, Jo sneaks into the Ice Warriors' quarters to look for evidence against them. She is caught by the Warrior Ssorg and locked in, but manages to escape. In the corridors she encounters Aggedor and runs off, terrified - only to meet Ssorg and his Ice Lord master Izlyr coming in the opposite direction. Ssorg investigates Jo's claim that she has seen Aggedor, but can find no sign of the beast.

The Doctor, meanwhile, has been led by the mute Grun down into the caves below the citadel. The King's Champion then runs off, leaving the Doctor to face Aggedor. The Time Lord also flees and, finding a secret panel in the rock wall, goes through. Beyond is the Temple of Aggedor where Hepesh has him arrested, charged with sacrilege. He is brought before the King and committed to trial by combat - with Grun.

The Doctor is locked in a cell to await the contest but Hepesh releases him, urging him to leave and allow Peladon to return to the old ways. The High Priest provides a map showing a safe route through the underground tunnel system and the Doctor decides to follow it. The Time Lord is not surprised when he comes face to snout with Aggedor. Quickly, he uses his Sonic Screwdriver with a spinning mirror attachment to hypnotise the beast - with the aid of a Venusian lullaby! However, Jo then appears and, believing the Doctor to be in danger, frightens Aggedor off with a burning torch.

The two friends make their way back to the throne room where their account of events falls on deaf ears. The Doctor is escorted to the arena where he fights and defeats Grun. Arcturus then shows his true colours by trying to kill the Time Lord, but Ssorg destroys the creature with a blast from his sonic cannon. Seeing his plans crumble, Hepesh flees to the caverns. Arcturus had convinced the High Priest that the Federation would exploit Peladon and make slaves of the people; the creature had offered his planet's protection in return for the right to mine valuable Trisilicate on Peladon.

Grun goes down into the caverns and tries to communicate with Hepesh. However, Hepesh believes the mute has turned against him and knocks him out. He then leads some guards loyal to the old ways in an attack on the citadel.

The Doctor finds Grun and together they set off in search of the one thing that might quell the rebellion. In the meantime, Hepesh and his men have taken the King captive. They give the delegates an ultimatum: in return for the King's life they must leave and never come back. Suddenly the Doctor and Grun appear - with Aggedor! Hepesh tries to frighten the beast away with fire but it becomes enraged and strikes him down, killing him.

With Peladon's immediate problems solved the Doctor and Jo are preparing to attend the King's coronation when they learn that the <u>real</u> Earth delegate has arrived! They make a rapid departure in the TARDIS.

(4 on 5) - NEW 4 -

JO: So Arcturus is behind everything.

RECORDING BREAK
2 to D, 5 to D, 3 to B, D to 2

(4L. L. 1 2S B1 5.)

6. INT. THRONE ROOM. D.Y

5. 5 D — LCU DR

(PELADON WITH RELAXING DELEGATES. NO HELTSH)

6. 2 L — 3-S DR/TEL/SSORG

DR WHO: Arcturus - and Hepesh.

PELADON: But the attack on Arcturus?

7. 4 A — GROUP S SEE JO/IZLYN centre frame

DR WHO: Faked. He told Hepesh what to do

IZLYN: That is what I suspected.

8. 2 D — 2-S DR/GRUN

JO: And the things I found on the balcony and in Izlyn's room?

9. 1 A — CU TEL.

DR WHO: Planted. By Hepesh. Or one of his agents.

10. 5 L — CU DR

PELADON: But the manifestation of Sseekor...?

11. 1 A — CU TEL

DR WHO: Simple, your majesty. The sacred beast is not extinct. Hepesh found that they still exist on a high mountain and captured one. He managed to train it and kept it hidden beneath the Citadel ready to pop up whenever he needed a bit of haunting.

12. 5 L — GROUP DR/PEL. centre CENT. L IZLYN R

PELADON: But why did he do all this? What did he hope to gain?

- 4 -

(1 next)

(12 on 5) - NEW 5 -

DR WHO: The entire planet of Peladon under effective control of it. Which comes to the same thing.

13. 1 A — CU IZLYN

PELADON: And what about Arcturus?

14. 5 D — GROUP S

IZLYN: Peladon is rich in mineral deposits. The planet of Arcturus is poor.

DR WHO: That is why he wanted to make sure that Peladon didn't enter the Galactic Federation. He had already made a secret independent alliance with Hepesh.

15. 2 D — CU DR

CENTAURI: Extremely unethical. Fortunately the scheme has been foiled. All is well.

16. 1 A — CU JO

DR WHO: Is it?

17. 5 D — CU DR

JO: Yes, Arcturus is dead.

DR WHO: And Hepesh is still very much alive

(3.. F/X)

6A. CITADEL TUNNEL. D.Y

18. 3 L — WS low tunnel HEPESH through L to R

(HEPESH STRIDES ALONG)

(4A. LA 1A 2S B1 5.)

6A. INT. THRONE ROOM. D.Y

19. 5 L — GROUP S SEE DR/TEL/JO/IZLYN

(3 to C.)

DR WHO: Hepesh believed everything Arcturus told him. He still does. Hepesh genuinely thinks that the Federation means slavery. He'll go to any lengths to stop you joining.

TIGHTEN to MCU DR

JO: But what can he do?

(1 next)

- 5 -

(19 on 5) - NEW 6 -

20. 1 A — MCU IZLYN

DR WHO: Accuse the Ice Warriors of murdering Arcturus.

IZLYN: Yes. Mars and the world of Arcturus are old enemies. There would be war.

21. 2 D — 3-S CENT/DR/SSORG As PEL. moves R.N him L to throne

DR WHO: Exactly. Then the other members of the Federation will take sides...

CENTAURI: The Federation will be wrecked ... there will be inter-planetary conflict.

22. 5 D — CU PELADON

DR WHO: And Peladon will be first battlefield - blasted and sterile.

23. 4 A — L. 1½S DR/TEL

PELADON: What should I do, Doctor?

24. 5 C — CU TEL

DR WHO: Remove Hepesh. Replace him with someone you can trust. Now.

(2F 3.)

6C. INT. TUNNELS. D.Y

25. 3 A — WS tunnel HEPESH enters b/g meets CAPT. f/g

(HEPESH & GUARD CAPTAIN)

CAPTAIN: My lord

(4A. LA 1A 2S B1 5.)

26. 5 D — L. 3-S JO/TEL/DR

6D. INT. THRONE ROOM. D.Y

(2 to C, D to L)

PELADON: The shame would destroy him.

27. 4 A — CU DR

28. 2 D — 2-S TEL/GRUN TIGHTEN on GRUN, he nods to DR

DR WHO: It isn't easy to be a King, your majesty. But unless you replace Hepesh he will destroy everything you've worked for.

29. 4 A — L. 2-S TEL/DR

30. 5 D — 2-S TEL/GRUN

DR WHO: Well?

- 6 -

(2 next)

- NEW 7 -

(30 on 5)

31. 2 D — GROUP S TIGHTEST 4-S possible DR/JO/CENT/IZ See GRUN pass in b/g

PELADON: There could be civil war Will the Federation back me?

CENTAURI: The Galactic charter does not permit our involvement in internal politics -

IZLYN: An unanimous decision could call on emergency powers

JO: The circumstances are unusual, you know. And your own safety is involved.

CENTAURI: But it would be a break with all precedent. I can't persuade myself that interference of this kind is justified -

32. 4 A — WS see GRUN exit b/g

DR WHO: Then I think perhaps we ought to try to persuade you ....(TURN)

Will you excuse us, Your Majesty? We need a private conference for the benefit of Alpha Centauri....

33. 5 D — MCU TEL

(4 next)

(onto page 9)

- 7/8 -

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BREAKING THE ICE

David Auger

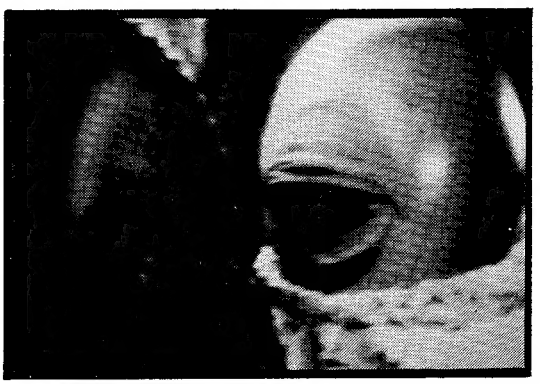
The citadel of the planet Peladon clings to the wind-torn side of the mountain with all the tenacity of one man's struggle to uphold his beliefs. Some would judge him to be evil, but, as with many villains, he would see his accusers as evil and himself as the sole upholder of good. Indeed, he begins with reason: "You will persist ... in this folly? Nothing I can say will deter you?" His words fall on the deaf ears of those intent on dragging Peladon from its harsh medieval existence towards a future of glittering technological promise. It is a future in which Hepesh knows his would be a redundant voice crying out to be heard. This vision is so terrible to him that he will even pervert that very faith which is so sacred to him; invoking the ancient curse and using a dumb animal as the manifestation of the spirit of Aggedor, the Royal Beast of Peladon and the symbolic protector of that which Hepesh holds dear.

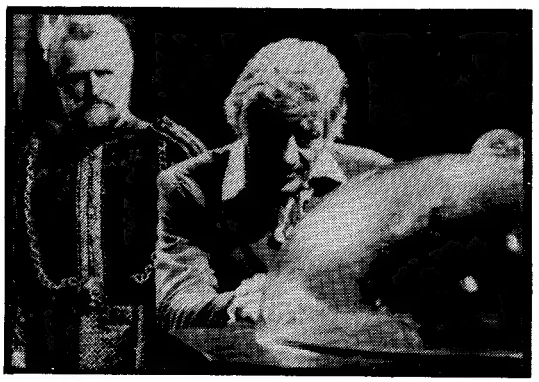
The scene is set for a story with strong gothic overtones as opposed to one in which science is pre-eminent. This, in tandem with the fact that the story had no location filming, makes 'The Curse of Peladon' an oddity of the Pertwee era. However, it is an oddity born of necessity rather than design. Because of expenditure elsewhere in the series, the production team had to produce a show on a low budget without the benefit of any location work; something which had been an important and distinguishing aspect of the series since 1970. These restrictions were included in the writer's brief given to Brian Hayles, who took the opportunity to create a tightly-knit community with sharply-defined characters. It is a task that Hayles obviously took delight in, but the result is a work that is closer to a stage play than to what we had come to expect from 'Doctor Who' in the early seventies.

However, even if 'The Curse of Peladon' seemed divorced from regular 'Doctor Who' of the time, the serial was finely in tune with political events of the period. The story hinges on the planet Peladon's attempts to join the Galactic Federation, at a time when the United Kingdom under the premiership of Edward Heath was seeking membership of the European Economic Community. Indeed, King Peladon can be compared with Heath; they were both men with dreams they strongly wanted to come to fruition. In the story, when the Federation Assessment Commission looks like terminating negotiations with Peladon, the young King pleads: "Without help, we will never raise ourselves from the dark ages. Do not desert us now." And the analogy with political history can be taken even further, with Hepesh acting as a staunch 'anti-Marketeer' of the Enoch Powell ilk. And like Powell, Hepesh expresses an aversion to the intermingling of different races. This is evident in conversations with Peladon, when he insists on describing the King's late mother as "the Earth woman" instead of "Queen".

Considering King Peladon's parentage, it is not surprising that, when the Doctor and Jo Grant arrive and are mistaken for the Earth delegation, he exhibits an immediate attraction to the young woman. She becomes even more desirable when, to the Doctor's surprise, she demonstrates the airs and graces acquired from a more privileged upbringing. According to the planet's strict aristocratic traditions, only females of Royal blood are admitted into the throne room, so Jo uses her initiative and, speaking with a 'plum' accent, poses as a visiting member of the Earth Royal Family - "Princess Josephine of TARDIS", no less! Apart from Jo's physical attraction, King Peladon sees a more practical reason for a liaison with the 'Princess': through her, his bond with Earth could be more strongly cemented. At first, Jo appears aloof and does not seem to reciprocate her suitor's interest until she allows her feelings to show when she realises the King's parallel intention: "All you want is a political ally ... No, I'm strictly neutral!"

If it had not been for the restrictions imposed by the budget, it is unlikely that the intricate relationship between Jo and King Peladon would have held a place in the then accepted 'Doctor Who'. The scenes involving the couple have a marvellous theatrical intensity which allowed Katy Manning to break the stereotyped portrayal of Jo Grant which up till then had been imposed upon her. Her performance is genuinely moving, such as in the scene where, despite that previous claim of neutrality, Jo tries to use the King's fixation with her to save the Doctor: "You asked me once if I believed in you, and here is





your opportunity to show you are a civilised king." Unfortunately for Jo, Peladon's main concern is naturally with his kingdom and he is unwilling to cast off the yoke of tradition that condemns the Doctor. But in spite of this, he still sees it as proper to reaffirm his intentions towards Jo. Jo reacts in total disbelief: "I don't understand you ... One minute you're condemning the Doctor to death and the next minute you're proposing to me!"

For the audience, the Doctor's immiment execution also helps to clarify the intentions of another character, whose motivations up till then have remained somewhat suspect. The Doctor's antipathy towards Izlyr, the Martian delegate, is a result of the previous encounters with Izlyr's race. As the viewer watches the reptile men lumbering along the torch-lit corridors, listening to the familiar drum-rolling accompaniment, he too is prey to the same prejudices which affect Doctor Who; prejudices not unlike those which influence Hepesh. It is ironic that the Doctor's suspicions only cause him more trouble: when he sends Jo to find evidence against the Ice Warriors, the two travellers succeed only in incriminating themselves. Fortunately for them, Izlyr is a reasonable creature who is willing to listen before passing judgment. It is a trait which is normally familiar in the Doctor but, once again, like Hepesh, he seems unwilling to accept change. When Jo eventually confronts Izlyr with the Doctor's claim that the Martians are barbaric warriors, Izlyr stresses that this is no longer the case and that his race had indeed changed: "We reject violence ... except in self defence." However, the transformation in the Martians' psyche is not confined simply to their moral alignment. The Martians who appear in 'The Curse of Peladon' seem to come from a different culture than before: they are now a virtuous breed of beings, with strong customs like Peladon, where before they were little more than 'thugs'. The only nobility they had previously exhibited was the kind associated with two boxing contestants needlessly inflicting pain on each other. This difference in characterisation is evident from early on in the story: Izlyr remarks that like his own world, Earth still adheres to the aristocratic process. The Doctor is obviously unimpressed as he icily replies: "Yes ... in a democratic sort of way."

With all the Doctor's animosity towards the Ice Warriors, it seems fitting that his survival should be dependent on the very creatures whom he has so far mistrusted. With the worsening situation on Peladon, certain members of the Federation Assessment Commission favour fleeing and leaving the Doctor to his fate, but it is Izlyr who prevents them from doing so: "Federation law only allows unanimous decision ... and I voted to stay."

The other two Federation representatives attending the conference complete a refreshing 'galactic mix' of the type which had not been seen in 'Doctor Who' since the mid-sixties. Arcturus, a creature forced to live in a protective environmental suit, is a dour, distasteful-looking fellow with the irritating habit of quoting from Federation statutes whenever a debate is not proceeding in a manner to his liking. Alpha Centauri is a highly-strung hexapod of indeterminate sexuality, whose shrieking bouts of hysteria are obviously intended as a comic contrast to Arcturus. However, despite their very different temperaments, and notwithstanding the fact that Arcturus is eventually revealed as a traitorous villain, they have one tendency in common which Izlyr describes quite astutely: "Arcturus is a coward by logic and Centauri is a coward by instinct."

The decision to have these different aliens in the story was a bold move, although in its execution it clearly shows the advantages the old monochrome image has over the sharper colour television picture. The once-impressive Ice Warriors now seem cheap and plastic-looking. Even the new creatures lack a similar visual credibility. This is especially noticeable with Aggedor's costume, which is unfortunate considering the important role the character plays in the final victory over Hepesh, the misguided villain of the piece.

As the priest dies in the King's arms, in a sad and moving speech, he appears to repent for what he has done: "I wanted to save our world ... to preserve the old ways. Perhaps I was wrong, Peladon. I hope so. Your future which you set so much store by is yours now."

When watching that death scene, one cannot help but wonder if the Master, that arch protagonist, could ever show as much penitence as Hepesh does in his final moments...

SPACE & TIME

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SPACE & TIME

PRODUCTION OFFICE

Jeremy Bentham

Write us a ghost story set on an alien planet. That was the basic parameter handed out to writer Brian Hayles by Script Editor Terrance Dicks and Producer Barry Letts.

Dicks in particular was a great lover of gothic melodrama and had been pondering for some time on the feasibility of presenting a 'Universal Studios'-style ghosts and monsters story in 'Doctor Who'. Initially concerned about unleashing such 'adult' fare upon children, his confidence had been boosted by the success of the black magic story 'The Daemons' (Serial "JJJ") the year before.

Hayles, an experienced writer in the 'horror market', delivered a virtually flawless script complete with all the traditional 'Universal Studios' cliches - a bleak castle on a barren mountainside, a dark and stormy night and an ancient curse upon a noble family.

One other element the story had was the Ice Warriors, the creatures Hayles had so successfully created for 'Doctor Who' back in the Patrick Troughton years. Initially though, Hayles was dubious about the production team's wish to include them in this new serial.

"I liked the Ice Warriors, but I don't think I would have wanted to have brought them into every adventure. I wanted to develop them because I felt that, like the Cybermen, I could dip into their lifestyle every couple of thousand years or so, and it would be nice to see how they had developed. At the same time they could only continue if they were popular, and they did happen to creep into Peladon.

"They weren't the original intention. My intention was originally to give a new kind of villain that role. But the BBC felt they were a popular monster and they asked me to bring them back."

Hayles thus delivered Ice Warriors, but he turned the tables on the BBC by making the creatures very different to those seen in previous stories.

"Here was a question that, having done them twice as the dirty villains, I wanted to play a trick; perhaps turn the thing upside down. Very often when you find monsters like them or the Daleks or the Cybermen, you know they're going to be villainous. So we started off the serial and as soon as they appeared everybody would say, 'Aha, they're into something dirty'. And, of course, we turned them around and they actually became, in a sense, the co-heroes of the plot with a certain nobility of purpose. But if you followed their psychology, they were still basically the same people. It simply happened that, for once, their motivation was similar to the Doctor's, although even he suspected them during the evolvement of the plot. He accepted their help very reluctantly, because he knew they would turn nasty at the drop of a scale or something."

The notion of setting the story virtually entirely within the confines of a castle appealed greatly to Barry Letts as a money-saving measure, as at the time of commissioning he was looking to balance the books for the substantial spending approved for Malcolm Hulke's latest story (Serial "LLL").

Thus 'The Curse of Peladon' (originally titled 'The Curse' and then 'Curse of the Peladons') would be the first Jon Pertwee serial shot entirely in studios with no location filming whatsoever. There would be some provision for filming at Ealing Studios but, as with the very first 'Doctor Who' shows, this would be available only for those scenes that were technically difficult to do in a recording studio.

The Director picked for this serial was Lennie Mayne, a rising BBC staffer who was well known for bringing shows in on time and on budget, and for using studio facilities to the fullest. He was also notorious for his colourful personality.

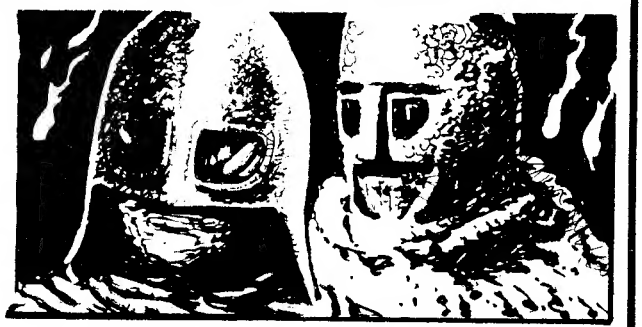
Mayne was an Australian who had come to England some years earlier and had trained as a dancer before the urge to go behind-the-scenes overtook him. Well aware that his dancing background might be viewed by many in the TV industry with raised eyebrows, Mayne countered by adopting almost the caricature image of the Australian 'Ocker'. He was loud, ebullient and possessed of a sense of humour as broad as his command of Anglo-Saxon expletives. He lived on nervous energy and was quite capable of reducing victims of his wrath to quivering wrecks with explosive outpourings from his spectacular vocabulary. Nevertheless, for all this, Mayne was a character much admired and liked by all those who worked with him, many of whom recall with affection the many anecdotes connected with the man.

Terrance Dicks' favourite story concerns the studio debut of the Alpha Centauri alien which had been designed and assembled by the Visual Effects Department. The first hint he and Barry Letts had that anything was amiss was the moment Lennie Mayne stormed into the Producer's room and told them in no uncertain terms what he thought of the costume. Puzzled, Letts and Dicks followed the vociferous Auusie down to the props room where stood the upright form of the one-eyed Centauri. "So?", asked the Producer, not spotting anything obviously at fault. "Well, just look at it," retorted the by now florid-complexioned Director. "It looks like a giant prick!" Astonished, both Letts and Dicks took a closer look, and then, almost simultaneously, burst into fits of laughter as they too saw what Mayne meant. And once having seen it in that light, no-one on the production crew was capable of looking at the creature without collapsing with an attack of the giggles. Eventually, Dicks remembers, Barry Letts had a quick word with Costumes who hurriedly ran up a yellow cloak to disguise much of the cause of the hilarity.

Luckily for all concerned rehearsals and recordings went ahead with scarcely a hitch. This was especially fortuitous as, fairly late in the day, Letts decided he wanted to switch 'The Curse of Peladon' from the third to the second story of the season, to provide a better alternation between the three Earthbound serials of the season and the two set in space. Thus the final episode of the show was not even recorded when episode one began transmission in January 1972. This marked the first occasion in the history of the series that stories were broadcast in a different order to that in which they were recorded.

Many areas of Britain missed episodes of 'Doctor Who' around this period due to extensive power cuts resulting from a strike by power station workers. Episode three of this story was the most severely hit; hence why, before episode four began, an extensive reprise of last week's happenings was read out on air to the accompaniment of several colour slides. Some newspapers too carried these details in their Saturday editions.

LOVING THE ALIEN



Stephen James Walker

Over the years, numerous different theories have been put forward to account for 'Doctor Who's popularity. One of the most commonly cited factors is the great appeal of the many and varied alien environments and races which feature in the stories. To suspend one's disbelief and journey with the Doctor to a completely unknown world is an exciting, fascinating and often frightening experience. No less compelling is the prospect of encountering strange and unearthly creatures, the like of which one would normally meet only in the wildest of dreams - or nightmares. Put another way, a large part of the series' appeal derives from its 'escapism value'; for twenty-five minutes every Saturday teatime it transports the viewer away from his or her normal life and sets them down in an unfamiliar time and place to experience a thrilling adventure. And having been shown that time and place, the viewer can return there even when not watching the programme, simply by exercising the powerful mental tool of imagination.

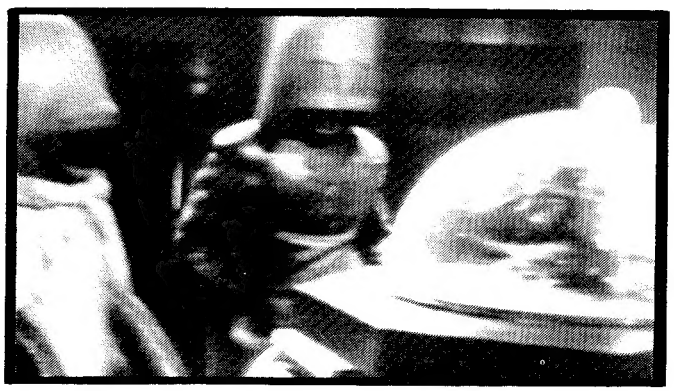
It is hardly surprising, then, that those stories which have presented the most memorable alien planets and beings are amongst the most popular in the show's history. For example, 'The Web Planet' (Serial "N") is particularly well-known for the alien quality of its setting and for being the only story (bar 'Beyond the Sun' (Serial "C")) which involves no humanoids other than the Doctor and his companions. In this serial our four heroes encounter an extraordinary variety of alien life-forms on the planet Vortis: the Zarbi ants and their scuttling 'larva-guns'; the butterfly-like Menoptra and their underground 'cousins', the Optera grubs; and, at the 'root' of the problem, the Animus parasite in its living, growing web-city.

'The Curse of Peladon' is another story which features representatives of a number of different alien species: the cowardly hexapod from Alpha Centauri; the delegate from Arcturus encased in his elaborate life-support machine; the Ice Lord and his Ice Warrior companion from Mars; and the legendary Peladonian beast Aggedor. These creatures are fascinating not simply because of their striking alien appearances but also because each has its own 'characteristics'; in effect, its own personality. Much of this personality is conveyed through the way in which the creatures move and speak. For example, in the case of Alpha Centauri it is not only the physical appearance that one remembers but also the timid, shuffling gait and nervous movements effected by actor Stuart Fell within the costume, and the shrill, high-pitched voice created by vocal artist Ysanne Churchman (who was instructed by Director Lennie Mayne to make it sound "like a homosexual Civil Servant"!). Similarly, in the case of the Martians it is their slow, lumbering movements and rasping, whispered speech that one recalls.

From the characteristics of these individual creatures

it is possible to draw some basic conclusions about the different races and cultures they represent. However, in each case the lack of any recognisable features means that little in the way of in-depth characterisation can be attempted - a perennial problem in 'Doctor Who'. It is only where humanoid characters are concerned that complex characterisation of individuals can be developed with any prospect of success. In this respect 'The Curse of Peladon' goes one better than 'The Web Planet', as it does feature a humanoid race - the Pels. The benefits of this are obvious when one considers, for example, the complex relationship between King Peladon and Hepesh, or the romance between Jo and the King; characterisation of this depth would be extremely difficult, if not impossible to achieve if beings with no recognisable features were involved.

'The Curse of Peladon' was, of course, only the second Jon Pertwee story to be set on another planet. It might, perhaps, be supposed that stories set on Earth would be intrinsically less interesting than those set on other worlds, simply because they lack the fascinating 'alien' quality which is so much a part of the show's appeal. However, one need only consider a serial such as 'Marco Polo' (Serial "D") to realise that an Earth-bound setting can be just as alien to the viewer as a far-distant planet. Even though the UNIT stories of the Seventies were set in England, just a few years in the future, the situations and events depicted were certainly well outside of anything viewers would normally experience! Hence the escapism factor still applied. And in this sense, the Pertwee stories were just as much adventures in Space and Time as the Hartnell and Troughton episodes had been...



SIGNS AND WONDERS

Peter Owen

In the early 1970s, while 'Doctor Who' was breaking with its roots and establishing a new format, a revolution of a different kind was taking place in the area of literary criticism: structuralism had arrived. Questioning the previously unquestionable, challenging concepts that had always been taken for granted, the structuralists represented a major threat to the literary establishment, and the ensuing struggle between 'traditional' criticism and structuralism was - and still is - a hard-fought one.

Briefly, structuralist theory seeks to understand literature (and drama, and hence television, cinema, etc) as a system of signs. Obviously, language itself is a sign-system (the signs are words), as is art (the signs are visual/aural images), and so on. Television is a 'mix' of several sign-systems - words, music, visual images - and constitutes a sign-system in its own right. The most important thing about these signs is that they are given 'meaning' not by their relation to reality, but by their relation to the other elements in the sign-system (the system - the 'structure' - is what it's all about, hence: 'structuralism'). So what has all this got to do with 'The Curse of Peladon'?

'The Curse of Peladon', like any 'Doctor Who' story, is a sign-system, although of course all the stories exist within the umbrella system of the series itself. What kinds of signs are being used in 'The Curse of Peladon'? How are they given 'meaning'? And how do they relate to the sign-systems from which they are drawn? Let us start with the opening scenes, which, in any story, are extremely important in terms of the way the action will be understood. The signs used to create the atmosphere are well-known ones: the dark mountainside, the lonely castle, the storm, the lightning - all these signify danger, fear and a sense of 'evil' to the viewer. The correct mood for the story is thus created, by a careful use of signs which draw on the viewer's knowledge of literature/TV/cinema; whether it's by reading gothic novels or watching Hammer movies, we all recognise the signs - there is evil afoot. We move inside the castle, and into the action: darkness, voices raised in argument, monsters, a dead body - all draw on our knowledge of the 'Doctor Who'/science-fiction sign-system to signify a dangerous struggle into which the Doctor must enter. It is worth noting that by now we are working not only within a televisual sign-system, but within a science-fiction system - the appearance of the Aggedor monster on, say, 'Monty Python's Flying Circus' would signify humour, not terror. By way of a dramatic contrast, we quickly move to the TARDIS interior scene, where a new set of signs is employed. The Doctor's ramblings about the "interstitial beam-synthesiser" signify him as 'scientific'; Jo's reference to her planned "night out on the town with Mike Yates" signifies 'normal/believable'. Thus the TARDIS environment is 'safe', a signification which has been built up over the last eight or nine years. Here the viewer's familiarity with the show has enabled him to build up a localised system, in which the Doctor, the TARDIS and Jo do represent safety/normality. The tragedy of the loss of the TARDIS, when it tumbles down the mountain, is not the danger to the ship itself but the fact that the characters with whom we sympathise have been separated from the 'safe' environment, and must enter the one we know to be 'dangerous'.

One of the ways in which a story can be made more intriguing is by altering or reversing the value of one of the signs in the system, which is exactly what Brian Hayles does here. When Ssorg first appears, a whole range of signs spring into action: the seasoned viewer, familiar with the 'Doctor Who' sign-system, knows that, within that system, Ice Warrior equals 'bad'; the ominous drumbeat which accompanies the alien signifies 'dangerous'; and the Doctor - who we know is (nearly always) right -

actually tells Jo that they are warlike and unpleasant. The meaning that our knowledge of 'Doctor Who' forces us to attach to the Ice Warriors is first re-inforced (by the Doctor) and then subverted (by the events of the story). The Ice Warriors turn out to be noble and honest (this time!) and it is this change in the value of the sign 'Ice Warrior' that proves one of the most fascinating elements of the story. However much we trust Ssorg, for example, it is inevitable that he still evokes 'fear' when he discovers Jo in his quarters in episode two.

Whereas in understanding Jo, the Doctor and the Ice Warriors the viewer is able to draw on his knowledge of the 'Doctor Who' sign-system, in the case of the other characters this is not possible: they must be understood in terms of 'The Curse of Peladon' alone. The non-humanoids, perhaps because they are non-humanoid, are given exaggerated human character-traits to make them recognisable. Alpha Centauri is quickly presented as 'coward', Arcturus as 'belligerent/dangerous', and because they lack the visual aspects which we use to identify people, their tone of voice becomes an important signifier. In episode one, they both express concern about Torbis' death and the possible danger to themselves. However, Arcturus' electronic, Dalek-esque voice signifies an antagonistic attitude; Centauri's high-pitched squeak, a cowardly one. The humanoid characters are more psychologically 'real' - Hepesh, Peladon and even Grun have their good points and their bad points. One reason why humanoid characters are always more 'real' (as characters) than man-in-a-suit monsters is simply that we are more adept at reading the many signs that the human body uses (especially facial signs).

Having established, then, that 'The Curse of Peladon' is a system of signs, how are we to read the sign-system? In structuralism a great emphasis is put on binary oppositions (male/female, darkness/light, past/present, etc); and in the first scene of the story we find just such an opposition being outlined. There is the old or traditional way of life, signified by Hepesh, and the new or progressive path followed by Torbis and Peladon. This basic opposition, the old against the new, is the basic theme around which the story revolves; it also provides the story with a solid structure. The old (Hepesh, Grun, Aggedor) is seen as backward, primitive and violent, but also as somehow 'noble'. The new (Izlyr, Centauri, Arcturus) is seen as scientific, political and intelligent. Peladon is the man with the choice, and because he is constructed as basically 'good', his desire to progress seems to offer the 'new' as the ideal. However it is curious that the ambassadors of this 'new age' are the Ice Warriors (militaristic), Centauri (a coward) and Arcturus (a traitor). The Doctor, of course, represents a compromise - he sees the value of the old and the new, and is able to communicate with both.

Communication is arguably the key to the whole story - in one sense it is a story about sign-systems (or 'languages'), about their relation to reality, and about people's ability to use them. The old way of life on Peladon is represented by a sign-system which is non-linguistic: Aggedor is represented by statues that look like him, not sound like him, and Torbis' death is hailed by Hepesh as "a sign of Aggedor's anger". By way of contrast, the delegates have mastered the linguistic system of signs - they are all, to some extent, political 'smooth talkers'. The ability to use the sign-system is of crucial importance, and it is significant that the two most primitive characters are Aggedor and Grun - one is a monster, one a mute; they make noises but they cannot speak. The Doctor eventually succeeds because he is able to communicate on every level, in any language-system: an 'official', authoritative tone with the delegates, simple questions and gestures with Grun, musical mumbo-jumbo with Aggedor. Language is all-important: Hepesh incurs his own death when he tries to deny the link between language and reality: "Do not listen to the alien," he cries, "I will show you the reality of this creature." He is wrong - the Doctor's words are in touch with reality, and he wins the day because of his skill in using the sign-system.

A structuralist approach may be helpful in our attempts to understand a story like 'The Curse of Peladon', but it is not, of course, the only interpretation possible. As Hepesh says in episode two - "To the unbeliever, all signs are as dust in the wind."

TECHNICAL NOTES

Jeremy Bentham

Although 'The Curse of Peladon' was granted less than the 'standard' budget for a four-part story, the lack of any location overheads meant that a fairly generous sum could be allocated to Visual Effects.

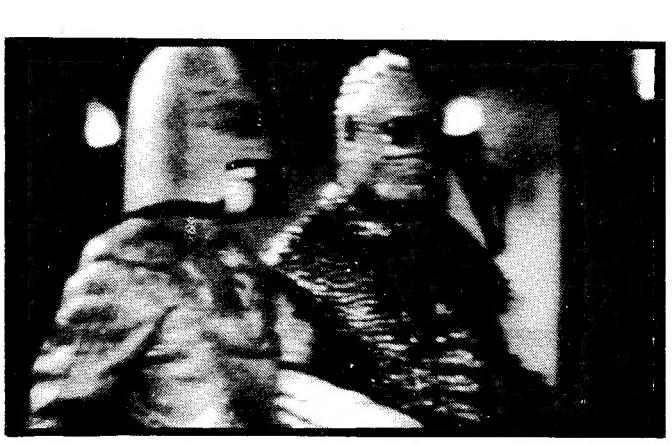
Two effects designers were appointed to this story, Bernard Wilkie - one of the Department's founders - and Ian Scoones, a one-time member of Gerry Anderson's production team. Perhaps not surprisingly, the job of designing and building the model stage went to Scoones, while Wilkie handled the full-sized effects props.

Scoones' model stage was a huge table-top construction about 12 ft square, made roughly to the scale he would have worked to with Anderson. The set was the castle of Peladon, perched atop its storm-swept mountain, with a ledge some distance below on which the miniature TARDIS would arrive. In order to shoot the set from a variety of angles Scoones positioned mirrors around it so that the 16mm Ariflex camera could 'see' perspectives that would otherwise have been impossible. Via these mirrors it was possible to film shots from the ledge looking vertically up at the castle, or forced perspective shots down from the ledge towards the valley below. This was crucial if Director Lennie Mayne was to achieve the dramatic shots of the TARDIS plunging down the mountainside in episode one, or give the impression, in episode two, of Jo sidling along a dangerous sill hundreds of feet from the ground. A blue spotlamp, switched on and off, and a wind machine created the illusion of a dark and stormy night setting.

The model set inserts were filmed at the TV Centre and were the first segments of the story to go in the can. Among the Effects crew shooting these scenes was a young assistant on holiday attachment to the unit named Mat Irvine.

A full-sized mock-up of the mountain ledge was built at Ealing Studios for the scenes of the Doctor and Jo attempting to climb up to the castle. Again, blue spotlamps and a wind machine were used to suggest a storm. This was the last time a vertical cliff-face set was ever constructed at Ealing; thereafter, for safety reasons, all such sets were built horizontally on the ground and shot with a camera mounted on its side.

The finished TV picture of the Doctor and Jo climbing up the mountain appeared to show them being washed by driving rain. This, though, was an illusion created in the recording studio during final mixing. Mayne positioned one of the recording cameras to shoot the thin clouds of smoke coming from the 'Flambeau' torch-holders, then sporadically superimposed this picture over the telecine-relayed film footage to give the impression of torrential rain.



All these 'exterior' scenes were pre-recorded onto tape at the start of the first studio day, January 17th 1972 in TC4.

Bernard Wilkie's contribution to the story consisted mainly of the two Aggedor statues and the Arcturus alien. The statues were blocks of styrofoam cut to shape and painted by Wilkie's assistants. Studio safety regulations would not have allowed a heavier material to be used in their construction as one of them had to come crashing down from the ledge above the throne room doors at the end of episode one.

Arcturus was a sturdier creation. Built on a metal frame, the interior boasted a seat for its operator, below which was a car battery. This battery powered both the lights and the aquarium pumps that bubbled air up through the two perspex, water-filled tubes on the side of the casing. A movement by the Operator's foot could extend or retract the laser gun. Crowning the unit was a perspex dome mounted on a waterproof dish, in the centre of which was the latex-rubber head of Arcturus. Rising vertically through the head was a hollow tube that enabled the Operator down below both to wriggle the head from side to side, and to pump jets of water up onto the dome.

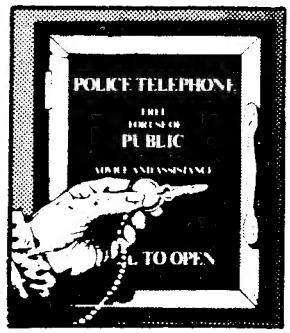
The Ice Warriors were handled mainly by the Costume Department. Ssorg was basically just a cobbling together of body pieces as old as the original Ice Warrior story (Serial "OO"), including Varga's robustly-constructed chest and head pieces. Similarly, Izlyr's body unit was the one originally made for Slaar in 'The Seeds of Death' (Serial "XX"), with the addition of a cloak plus the mantle attaching it to the bodypiece. The helmet, however, was a replacement, the original having gone missing.

Alpha Centauri and Aggedor were both creations of the Costume Department. Centauri's head concealed an inner mounting so that the actor could wear it rather like a top hat with a chinstrap. His right arm could move all three right limbs simultaneously, while his left hand operated either the left limbs or the wire mechanism controlling eyelid movement.

Other mechanical effects for this show included the spinning mirror used by the Doctor to hypnotise Aggedor. Contrary to popular belief the batteries inside the Sonic Screwdriver powered only the light, not the mirror itself, which had to be spun by hand. Neither was the Doctor's lullaby to Aggedor any inspired musical composition; it was merely an adaptation of the Christmas carol 'God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen'.

'The Curse of Peladon' featured a couple of optical effects. Arcturus blasting a vase with his laser in episode one was a combination of 'rollback and mix' for the dematerialisation with a masked-off Inlay shot for the red glow, while the expanding concentric circles shown briefly as Ssorg's gun fired were a few frames of rostrum animation provided by the Graphics Department.

Freed now from his obligations to HAVOC, Terry Walsh, under the aegis of his own company PROFILE, arranged all the stunt sequences for this story. The scenes in the combat pit in episode three were shot at Ealing with Walsh himself doubling for Jon Pertwee on the most dangerous stunts. Pertwee, however, was keen to do as much as he could, and this resulted in him straining his delicate back badly at one point. He was in considerable pain throughout much of the rest of the story's production.



PRODUCTION CREDITS

Stephen James Walker

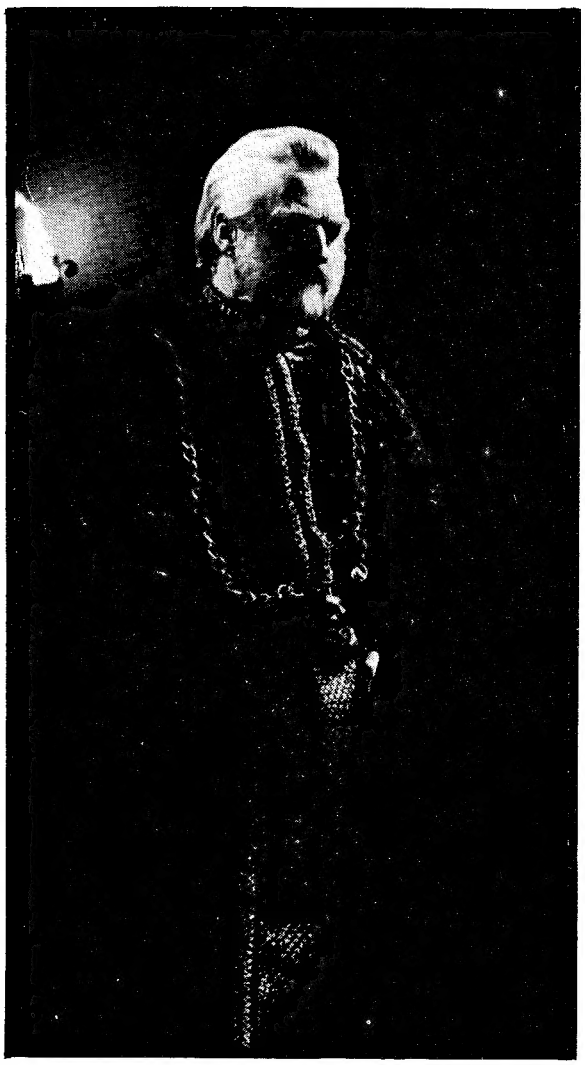
SERIAL "MMM" — COLOUR

PART 1	Duration 24' 32"	29th. January 1972
PART 2	Duration 24' 33"	5th. February 1972
PART 3	Duration 24' 21"	12th. February 1972
PART 4	Duration 24' 16"	19th. February 1972

CAST

STARRING:
Doctor Who.....Jon Pertwee
Jo Grant.....Katy Manning

FEATURING:
King Peladon.....David Troughton
Hepesh.....Geoffrey Toone
Alpha Centauri.....Stuart Fell
Voice of Alpha Centauri.....Ysanne Churchman
Izlyr.....Alan Bennion
Ssorg.....Sonny Caldinez



Arcturus.....Murphy Grumbar
Voice of Arcturus.....Terry Bale
Grun.....Gordon St Clair
Aggedor.....Nick Hobbs

WITH:
Torbis.....Henry Gilbert
Guards.....Chris Webb, Royston Farrell
Billy Dean, Derek Chafer
Mike Stevens, Stewart Barry
Guard Captain.....George Giles
Stunt Guards.....Terry Walsh, Dinny Powell
Roy Street, Billy Horrigan
Peter Brace, Mike Horsburgh
Les White, Rocky Taylor
Stunt double for Doctor Who.....Terry Walsh
Amazonia.....Wendy Danvers

TECHNICAL CREDITS

Production Assistant.....Chris D'Oyly-John
Assistant Floor Manager.....Ros Anderson
Assistant.....Sue Stapely
Technical Manager 1.....Howard King
Technical Manager 2.....Fred Wright
Sound Supervisor.....Tony Millier
Grams/Tape Operator.....Gerry Borrows
Camera Crew.....No. 8
Senior Cameraman.....Ron Peverall
Vision Mixer.....Michael Turner
Floor Assistant.....Michael Throne
Film Cameramen.....Fred Hamilton, Peter Sargent
Film Editor.....Michael Sha-Dyan
Visual Effects.....Bernard Wilkie, Ian Scoones
Costumes.....Barbara Lane
Make-up.....Sylvia James
Fight Arranger.....Terry Walsh for PROFILE
Incidental Music.....Dudley Simpson
Special Sound.....Brian Hodgson
Script Editor.....Terrance Dicks
Designer.....Gloria Clayton
Producer.....Barry Letts

DIRECTOR:

LENNIE MAYNE

BBCtv 1972